

of many battles — cavalry and infantry still well armed — suffered themselves to be cut up by a few Prussian lancers, whom they might have turned upon and annihilated.

On arriving at Philippeville Napoleon was compelled to wait some time outside the walls. He had need of the protection of its ramparts, for the Prussians, into whose hands he dreaded to fall, were close upon him, having tracked him with great pertinacity, and detached some cavalry in that direction. When he reached the gates of the town the men of guard would not admit him until the commander of the fortress came up and recognized him. He then entered with a very humble retinue, the drawbridge being raised and the barrier closed immediately afterwards. As soon as it was known that the Emperor was at Philippeville many of his scattered troops closed round the town in order to protect him and to receive in turn protection from the ramparts. This caused some uneasiness: such a gathering of men would alarm the Prussians that the Emperor was there. To obviate this recourse, he had to the following stratagem.

A number of emissaries were sent from the town to the camp, instructing them to counterfeit great terror, and to cry out, "Save yourselves! the Prussians are coming! The Uhlans are close upon us!" The emissaries played their parts so well, and the French soldiery were now so spiritless, that they broke up and fled like a flock of sheep. The emissaries then went on to spread over the country the deplorable news that the Emperor was blockaded in Philippeville. This was regarded as certain, and nobody on the roads of Metz and Laon, where the rumor was propagated, took it into his head to suspect that till then nothing more nor less than an admirable combination, a stratagem of war of an entirely new conception, imagined by the great man to conceal his line of march, on which his personal safety depended. But the public could not long be imposed upon, and after a few hours' rest, Bonaparte left Philippeville and took the road to Paris by Liocroi and Mosfiere.

It was at Philippeville that the Duke of Bassano and his